

CONESTOGA PUBLIC SCHOOLS TOWNHALL

PROPOSED BUILDING PROJECT DR. BETH JOHNSEN, SUPERINTENDENT

May 12, 2020 will be the voting date for the Bond Issue that would determine a 20 -year bond for \$15,230,000. The schematic drawings below are the designated spaces and program identifications for the Elementary Building site and the Jr. Sr. High Building site. A Building Project Committee conducted a Community-Invited "Zoom Meeting" Presentation on March 31, 2020. During the 1 ½ hour presentation and question & answer session, the Committee shared information on the proposal to 110 viewers. During the Zoom Presentation, the Committee shared the schematic drawings and described the purposes for all additions and renovations. Viewers submitted questions, allowing the Committee members to respond immediately and also reflect on those questions in written form. Please find the questions contained below. Interested patrons and voters can find the complete resources of information on the Conestoga Public Schools website: www.conestogacougars.org

BUILDING PROPOSED BUILDING PROJECT FAQ:

Conestoga Public Schools has proposed a Bond for the May 2020 Election to accommodate continued growth and to meet the needs of a modern day learning environment. Over the past few years, the Board of Education and Conestoga Administration have been gathering feedback from staff, students, and community members to clarify needs of our current and future programs. The BOE has appropriated funds and been prudent with levying our patrons. Passing a Bond now would be in keeping with this mindset, as two bonds will expire creating no tax increase to our patrons when passed. This Bond will pay for expansions and renovations to existing spaces, accommodating growth as well as providing 21st Century classroom environments to support the needs of current and future program needs. From these meetings, the following Q & A questions were created to inform patrons.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT "BUILDING FUND" USED FOR? WOULD IT CONTINUE GOING FORWARD?

The Building Fund is a savings vehicle for upcoming building related expenses. This money can be used for construction and/or major building items if the bonds were to not pass. However, for large building projects, issuing bonds is a more economical method and creates "economies of scale" versus simply "piecing out" a large project into small projects each year. If the bond passes, the bond levy would enable the district to drop off the current Building Fund levy.

WITH THE WEIGHT ROOM BEING MOVED, WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR THE DEN?

Removing weights from the Cougar Den would allow it to be a bigger space for conditioning and practices. It is a heat/cool controlled environment, which is great for our wrestlers. This would give them needed space for additional training and mats. Another example, last winter, Spring teams could not practice outside due to snow on fields and track prior to their first competitions. This space would allow track or soccer to still condition, do drills, train and practice technique as gym space is limited due to multiple programs competing for space.

IF THIS WERE TO PASS WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME?

The construction process timeline estimate would be 1-2 years starting from sale of the bonds. The sale of the bonds does not necessarily need to occur immediately upon voter approval, leaving time for the board to review bids from various construction companies.

HOW MUCH ADMIN AND STAFF WILL BE ADDED WITH THESE ADDITIONS?

There is no plan to add more admin. The additional classrooms at the high school are to accommodate existing programs and future programs. Admin evaluates class sizes annually to determine the need for additional staff.

IS THERE A BREAKDOWN OF HOW THE \$15.23M TOTAL PROJECT?(COST OF THE GYM; COST OF THE CLASSROOM ADDITIONS)

Estimates, subject to change between areas are \$3.9M elementary additions/renovations; high school science/art and general classrooms additions/stage renovation \$2.2M, district office with heightened security \$1.3M, media center renovation \$.6M, athletics addition (gym, locker rooms, concessions area, corridors) \$5.5M; \$1.5M furniture, fixtures etc.; .23M bond issuance costs (underwriting, registration, etc)

HOW MUCH HAS THE STUDENT BODY POPULATION INCREASED IN THE LAST 20 YEARS?

From 2009-2019 our student body has grown from 650-720. We will look back further and add the additional 10 year data.

WHEN IS THE VOTE? WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP UNTIL THEN?

Early Voting: <https://sos.nebraska.gov/elections/early-voting> Election Day: May 12th

CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT IS BEING DONE TO THE HS STAGE RENOVATION?

The stage is a large space that is currently not as purposeful as it could be. Evaluating existing spaces is essential during this project to determine which spaces need to be renovated and which need additions. Storage is an issue as is safety. The curtains are closed which creates a large unsupervised space. The curtains are old and need replaced. Cost to replace curtains like existing is \$20,000. We are looking into options that would make that space more functional and safe.

DID I SEE THAT WITH THE ADDITIONS TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THERE WILL BE A PLAYGROUND ADDED TO THE SOUTH END NEAR THE DAYCARE?

Yes, this is a weather protected area that would include a fenced playground.

POPULATION DATA FROM THE PAST; EXPECTED CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 5-10 YEARS?

These articles contain information on growth patterns in our district. https://journalstar.com/business/local/census-nebraska-s-big-counties-keep-growing-while-rural-counties/article_c411fa3b-afla-5659-91c9-87d6ef290247.html<https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/ne/cass-county-population/>Economic Development link: <https://www.omahachamber.org/economic-development/cass-county-economic-development-council/>

COULD YOU GIVE A BIT MORE INSIGHT INTO THE DECISION TO DESIGN A FINE ARTS "SPACE" AND BUILD A NEW GYMNASIUM RATHER THAN BUILDING AN AUDITORIUM

Auditoriums consist of space being taken by seating and would not be usable for practices, except for the stage area, which we already have. We would like to look at the existing stage and make it more functional for Fine Arts and include a space for non athletic activities, including testing. See following answer for reason for gym. We are not gaining a gym, but replacing one we no longer own.

WHY TWO GYMS?

A second gym is needed at the jr/sr high school for practices and to qualify to host district contests in Murray. Our free usage of the Nehawka gym granted by the new owner will expire within the next few years. At the height of the winter sports season, there are 18 groups competing for time between the 3 gyms (elementary, high school & Nehawka). A new gym on the premises is necessary to meet the demands of our many practices, contests and community events as well as serve as classroom space. The Board supports a 100% student participation rate in educational, athletic and fine arts activities at both schools.

HOW LONG IS THE BOND FOR?

These are 20 year repayment bonds.

QCPUF - DOES IT STAY OR GO?

The QCPUF bonds, set to expire in 2023, will be refinanced and "rolled in" with the new bond issue to streamline into one bond payment.

\$4M EXPECTED FOR THE ELEMENTARY BUDGET, WHAT PORTION OF IT IS ALLOCATED TO CLASSROOMS/DAYCARE?

Estimates subject to change between areas: classrooms \$2.5M; daycare renovation \$390K, remainder for restrooms, storage, corridors, stairs & vestibules

IS THE GYM AS A STAGE A GOOD IDEA?

We will work to determine the best possible way to enhance our stage for One Act and other activities that use the stage and space.

ARE THE PROPOSED ADD-ONS LARGE ENOUGH? HOW MANY YEARS WILL THESE RENOVATIONS LAST?

The additions and changes will accommodate our current needs as well as handle additional growth. While we believe the changes we have planned will accommodate Conestoga for a number of years, we cannot predict with certainty the population growth. A plan to expand at the Jr. Sr. High School has been discussed as a contingency. If necessary, an additional Jr. High wing could be added.

SHOULD THE AGRICULTURE VALUATION BE ADJUSTED, WOULD THIS BE A PROBLEM IN PAYING THE BOND PAYMENT?

The current proposed bill that would potentially affect property valuation (ag and residential) is LB 974. LB 974 initiates school funding reform and property tax relief by replacing local property tax dollars used to fund education with state dollars. Should this bill pass, the district doesn't foresee a problem in paying the bond payments given that the intention of the bill is to replace property tax revenue with additional state funding.

HOW WILL THE FINE ART ADDITION HOUSE ALL THE FINE ARTS AND HANDLE THE STAGE RENOVATION/GYM DECISIONS?

The stage will not be "closed," but it does need to be updated and enhanced.

IF WE NEEDED THREE GYMS, WHY WAS THE NEHAWKA BUILDING SOLD?

The Nehawka building was sold to provide a cost savings to the district of \$68,000 per year which was being paid to maintain the building solely for the use of the gym for practices. The district is currently being allowed by the new owner to use the Nehawka gym free of charge for the next few years. The Board believes that patrons of the district would prefer to have a 3rd usable gym on the school premises where practices, district contests, and community events can be held within the current school buildings in Murray. Students won't have to be bussed down to Nehawka, providing another cost savings. The building has since been repurposed by the new building owner, potentially providing the possibility of jobs and/ or availability of space for businesses, rather than sitting unoccupied. Selling the building also alleviates the district from possible future expenses as the building continues to age.

HAS THERE BEEN DISCUSSION ABOUT RETURNING TO A FIVE DAY WEEK WITH THE NEW ADDITIONS?

This topic is evaluated annually during the school board strategic planning meeting. It was not a topic of discussion in regard to the bond proposal.

DOES THE BOND ACCOUNT FOR THE UPGRADING IT AND EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENTS?

The bond is for the aforementioned building construction costs of additions and renovations. The Board, in conjunction with Dr. Johnsen, has been fiscally prudent and therefore able to provide funding for recent IT upgrades. All high school students have MAC books to use at school and home and the junior high and upper grade elementary students have chrome books and ipads for in school use and home use (if checked out). Teachers have also received recent IT upgrades. The Board will continue to approve upgrades as necessary and be fiscally responsible with general funds in order to do so.

CAN YOU TOUCH ON FFA AND HOW THE ADDITION MAY HELP THEM? DO WE NEED A SECOND AG TEACHER?

The architects recommend flows based on best practices. Creating a CTE wing, which would include ag, is a recommendation. Ag classes would be moved closer to the existing greenhouse as well as the science and technology classrooms that are used in its teaching. The skills promoted in FFA, including entrepreneurial and leadership skills, are also promoted in FBLA and even Conestoga's Breakfast Club. The recommended design flow of the building is to best support educational goals. Examples include CTE, STEAM, and a Centralized Technology and Media hub.

WOULD THE PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN CLASSES USE THE PROPOSED DAYCARE PLAYGROUND OR WILL THERE BE A NEW PLAYGROUND BUILD SEPARATELY?

The new playground would serve a number of our younger classes including preschool, kindergarten and daycare. There will also be new/renovated playground space on the North side of the building.

WILL A CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM BE INCLUDED AS WELL?

This is certainly something that will be considered in our discussions of Career and Technical Education classrooms.

WHY 4 PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS?

The number of preschoolers continues to increase with the addition of free preschool to in-district patrons. Current enrollment is 53 and smaller class sizes are desired at such a young age. All 4 rooms would currently be used.

PROFESSIONAL STUDIES THAT HAVE BEEN DONE TO IDENTIFY THESE NEEDS?

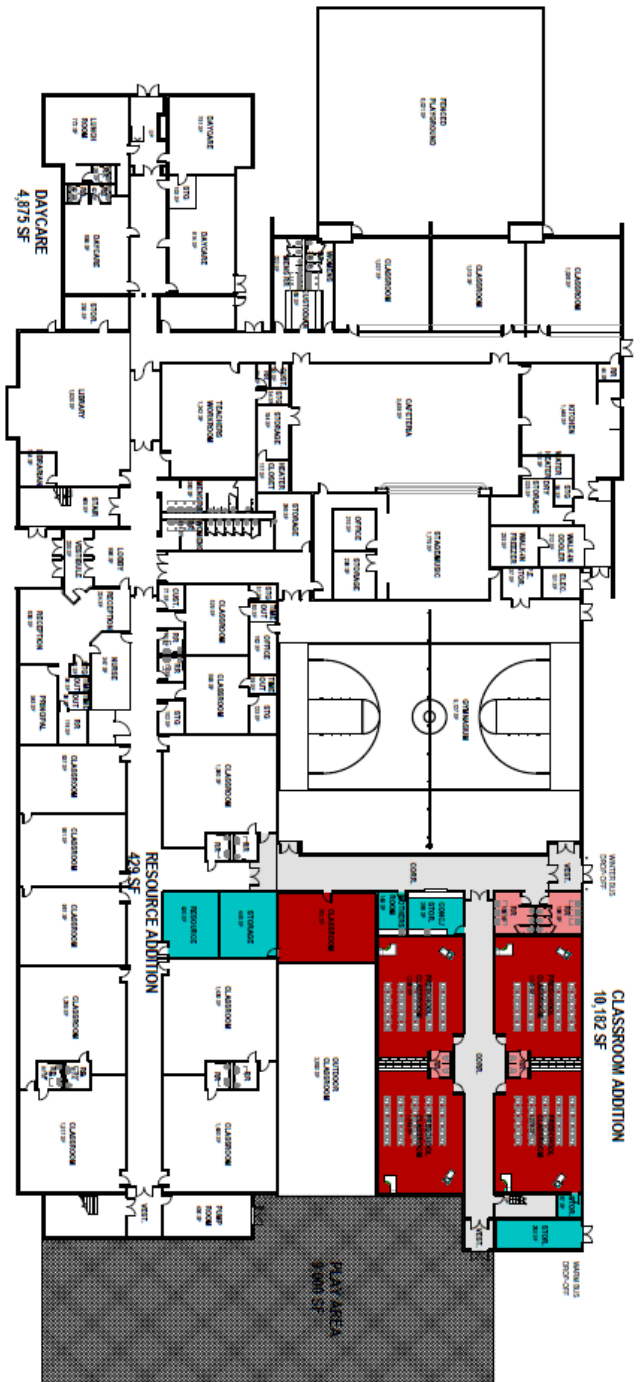
We have considered demographic as well as educational studies showing best practices to form the foundation of the proposed changes.

WILL THERE BE SCREENING ON THE FENCE ALONG THE SIDEWALK/ROAD?

Yes. State law requires certain fencing around such areas. Our idea includes a privacy type fence that meets these guidelines.

GOAL FOR CLASSROOM SIZE? HIRING MORE TEACHERS AND NOT SUPPORT STAFF.

The Board will continue to support our patrons desire for smaller class sizes. A Board policy exists limiting the amount of opt-in students, thus providing preference to our in district families. As population changes occur due to growth of the community, the need for teachers and support staff will be reassessed in order to keep a robust teacher/student ratio and reasonable support staff.



The Elementary schematic drawing includes earmarked areas for 12 additional classrooms; relocation of existing programs/classrooms, a daycare wing, and outside playground projects.

Schematic above is the main "1st Floor" of the Elementary; denoting classroom/program locations.

Right schematic is the 2nd Floor of the Elementary showing additional classrooms that provide relocation of grade-level classrooms that open up space for needed programs within the existing building layout.





The Jr. Sr. High building schematic shows a central technology/media hub, renovations for CTE (Career Technology Education), a centralized space for fine arts practice/assessment space, gym & locker rooms, inside-building weights program, security-enriched front office/entry, and a 7-classroom wing. The schematics are reassigned with program needs and will be further developed for specificity and future programs. Classrooms and represented spaces will be able to accommodate potential educational needs for future programs.

2020 NSCAS ACT OPTION FOR CURRENT THIRD-YEAR COHORTS

DIRECTOR OF CIRRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

NDE is still committed to providing every current third-year cohort student an opportunity to take the ACT paid for by NDE. ACT has had regular meetings with all State assessment leaders that have state ACT contracts. ACT has worked hard to provide options, but the continued uncertainty makes all of this difficult. The following are the three main options that ACT has explored with State leaders. 1. The addition of a State Testing Window sometime in the summer. The planned date for the start of the window is early June. NDE feels that this date is not likely to work for Nebraska but we are monitoring the situation to see if this window will be viable for our needs. 2. Offering vouchers for students to use for existing National Test Dates. The next two scheduled National Test Dates are June 13 and July 18. ACT canceled the April National Test Date. ACT continues to monitor the situation to see if these test dates and other National Test Dates might be affected. 3. Utilization of existing fall State Testing Dates. ACT has three State Test Dates in the fall that NE could use to give current third-year cohort students the option to take the ACT. The dates are in September and October and results would be back to students before most need those results for early college admissions deadlines.

STUDENT SERVICES

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, MRS. WRIGHT

E-Learning Support for Students During COVID-19

Due to the closure of school for the remainder of the year, teachers, students, and families alike, have all been placed in the unfamiliar position of e-learning. Navigating through the world of Zoom meetings, Google Classroom, and other online platforms can be overwhelming and confusing. It can also be difficult because students are not able to receive the face to face, personal support they would during a normal school situation. Students with disabilities and those who struggle in the classroom, in particular, are facing this problem each day as they log on to their classes and attempt to complete their work. Teachers and related service providers have been working tirelessly to provide support to students in a variety of different ways. They are making phone calls to parents, emailing students and parents, setting up individual Zoom meetings with students, frequently collaborating with general education teachers, recording videos to assist with learning, joining general education google classrooms, and dropping off and picking up work from students' door steps, to name a few. In this unprecedented time, school staff has banded together like never before to make sure all students are receiving support, even though it looks very different from what we are used to. As we continue into the final month of school and wrap up our E-Learning for the year, I know teachers and staff are looking forward to the time where we can all be together again in our school buildings, with our students, teaching and learning face to face.

ACT PREP AT CONESTOGA

JR./SR. INSTRUCTIONAL COACH, MS. LEWIS

High School looked a little different this year. In an effort to better prepare our students for the ACT test, an in-school ACT prep opportunity was established for sophomores and juniors. A collaborative effort of staff allowed students the opportunity to take a mock ACT test shortly after returning from Winter Break. Sophomores and Juniors dove into one-on-one sessions to review previous MAP scores and Pre-ACT tests taken over the course of their high school academic years. With growth in mind, students then engaged in four, two-hour sessions deep-diving into all four sections of the ACT: Reading, English, Math, and Science. These sessions were led by Mr. Hermeling. Students were given quick tips and strategies for increasing their scores and hints to maximizing their study sessions in preparation for the Spring testing date. Following these prep sessions, students were invited to dive into the John Baylor: On to College test prep program on four separate study nights throughout February and March. All students in grades 9-12 have access to John Baylor test prep. If your student needs assistance logging into their test prep account, questions can be directed to Mrs. Kreifels or found on the school website under the Guidance Page.



COLLEGE PLANNING BULLETIN

JR./SR. COUNSELOR, MRS. KREIFELS

College-prep resources to help you through COVID-19

If you need help with the college planning or financial aid processes during these unusual times, check out these resources: Free help from EducationQuest – Even though our offices are temporarily closed, our college-planning specialists are available to help you. Contact the location nearest you for a free appointment via phone or computer. Weekly Countdown2College emails for juniors & seniors – Sign up to stay on track to college. Virtual campus tours – Since you can't visit college campuses right now, check out this list of Nebraska schools that provide virtual tours. The college you plan to attend – Check the college's website for COVID-19 information, and contact the school if you have questions. Most colleges are providing one-on-one assistance via tools like Zoom, Skype, and FaceTime.

Seniors... borrow wisely for college!

Review these tips before you decide how much to borrow in student loans: Borrow only what you need, even if it's less than the amount offered in your award letter: Try to use your student loan money only for tuition, room and board, books, and fees. Get a part-time job during college to pay other expenses. · Apply for financial aid each year you attend college by completing the FAFSA: Continue to look for scholarships while you're in college. · Keep track of your student loan debt throughout college at nslds.ed.gov. To learn more, read the EducationQuest Blog article: "What is This Student Loan on My Award Letter?" and see the "Paying for College" section at EducationQuest.org.

Juniors... here's your to-do list for May

Narrow your college choices to three or four. If you haven't visited your top choices, take a virtual tour. Become familiar with the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). You and your parents can complete this form to apply for college financial aid on or after October 1. Update your Activities Resume at EducationQuest.org. Include extracurricular activities, honors, awards, and part-time jobs.

For free help with college planning, contact EducationQuest Foundation: Omaha Lincoln Kearney Scottsbluff 402-391-4033 402-475-5222 308-234-6310 402-479-6654 888-357-6300 800-303-3745 800-666-3721 800-303-3745, ext. 6654

A NOTE FROM THE JR./SR. HIGH PRINCIPAL

MR. ROB GEISE

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to present us with many obstacles. Our teachers and students have developed routines and continue to impress every day with their perseverance, flexibility, discipline and willingness to learn. While we strive to minimize the gap of missed knowledge that might exist due to these unfortunate circumstances, we continue to be mindful that this situation is difficult for all. One of the most difficult obstacles to overcome through this situation is the loss of the daily interaction between students and teachers. There is no substitute for the relationships that are formed when in the building every day. I credit all levels of our community and school system for rising to the challenge to best serve our students. I believe Cougar Nation will come back better and stronger than ever! Like all of you, my heart goes out to the class of 2020. We continue to work to recognize them as they deserve. We're hoping for a traditional graduation ceremony. However, if circumstances dictate otherwise, we will make it the best we can for our students. We're proud of our seniors and admire their ability to persevere through such a difficult time. Class of 2020 – thank you for all you've done for Conestoga Public Schools! We're proud of you!

SPANISH

TEACHER, MRS. SPANGLER

¡Hola! Conestoga is well into its first month of E-learning, and I am so proud of my students and coworkers for all of their hard work, dedication and patience during this transition to learning outside of the classroom. In the Spanish virtual classroom, we have been taking advantage of many online tools to help us continue to meet state standards. To assess interpersonal speaking and presentational speaking skills, students have been using the QuickTime feature of their Macbook Airs and Flipgrid, an Internet tool, to record audio clips. All four levels of Spanish have been using EdPuzzle to watch YouTube videos with embedded questions about topics including el Festival de Alasitas in Bolivia, tropical fruits in Colombia, the Guatemalan Civil War and Easter celebrations in Guatemala and Spain. While I am so grateful for all the hard work my students are doing during this necessary time of social distancing, nothing quite replaces the classroom experience of interacting with them on a daily basis. I miss seeing my students, but have been using Google Forms and Zoom to check in on their E-learning experience as well as student well-being during these unprecedented times. As a teacher, I want to make learning accessible while being mindful of new obstacles without the structure of the school day. I appreciate all of the feedback my students have given me and all the communication from both students and parents as we learn Spanish online. This truly is a community effort and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding your child's progress in Spanish. I am very excited to see all of your smiling faces in the fall!

SCIENCE TEACHER, MR. SCHMECKPEPER

When students enter my classroom at the high school, they are made aware of the beliefs that must be modeled to create a positive learning experience. The kids may think I talk about these beliefs too much; I do not think I talk about them enough. Perhaps what has made me the proudest during this e-learning process is the fact that the majority of my students (mostly freshman and sophomores) have continued to demonstrate these beliefs day after day during the last month. Rise Above and Own It - Ask your freshman or sophomore student what it means to be "above the line." I hope they can tell you that "above the line" behavior is disciplined behavior. As a whole, these science students are performing above the line on e-learning activities. The most important equation that I teach students is $E+R=O$ (Event + Response = Outcome). Of these three variables, we can only control our response. The covid-19 crisis has caused a dramatic event - learning must be done in an alternative setting. A disciplined response to this event involves putting aside distractions and persevering through the fact that this is different, this is hard. A disciplined response will lead to a desired outcome - I am a better student/person for what I have been through. My daily e-learning participation is close to 75-80%; these students are rising above and owning the responsibility of learning science. Better Together - In the classroom, students are encouraged to collaborate, seek help from peers, and ask questions.

We are better when we work together. In the time of social distancing, we have all found a way to be better together. Behind the scenes, I know there are parents holding their kids accountable and encouraging them to be "above the line." Students and parents have done an excellent job staying in contact. I know personally, I have answered more emails and taken more phone calls from students and parents in the last month than I did during the "normal" part of the school year. We are only at the half-way point of the e-learning experience. If we are to stay disciplined, it will take all of us - students, parents, teachers, and administration - working together. Pursuit of Excellence - I talk to the kids about being elite. All elite means is "the best version of yourself." This requires a positive attitude and growth mindset. I know for me, the number of stressful and difficult days during this time far outweighs the good days. However, I have done my best to remain positive by reminding myself why I am working so hard - I want all Cougars to be great at science. I do not want this e-learning period to make science classes down the road more difficult. That is why I continue to push and challenge my students, and that is why I encourage them to keep participating, keep trying, and keep persevering. Sometimes, in the pursuit of excellence, a little encouragement can help you be better tomorrow than you were today. So, Cougars, keep it up! You are doing great! I am VERY proud of you. The same goes for you Cougar parents! The teachers appreciate all you do! Thanks for the support.

E(LA)-LEARNING IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19 ENGLISH TEACHER, MS. FREEMAN



On March 13th, in my Freshman English, we were in the middle of reading Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet. We had just finished Act 2, and the students were going to act out the famous balcony scene in my class. I would transform my classroom into an English garden complete with a platform balcony for Juliet and a projection of the "inconstant moon." Students would put their own spin on the famous lines. Then suddenly, I was handing out two weeks of lessons and practicing a zoom call "just in case." Romeo & Juliet is a complex text in a drama format, and it is never meant to be read from a book. In class, we would listen to the BBC audio version of the play, stopping often to address the difficult language, plot, and themes. So how do you continue this in an e-learning environment? Continuity is important, so I recorded lectures on my computer just as I would have had in my classroom. Do I hate the sound of my voice? Absolutely! Did my dog bark in more than one recording? Yes! Did I screw up a Youtube upload because my computer fell asleep? Most Definitely. Change is always a challenge, but through those challenges, I think my students and I have learned valuable lessons. The most meaningful lesson I have learned is how my relationships with my students improve my ability to teach them. This Freshman class is the first class I have taught for two consecutive years. I feel cheated out of the final quarter with them. I looked forward to raising money for their class through a spring concession stand. I looked forward to taking them outside to read on beautiful spring days. I miss all of my kids, and even if I only get to see them during weekly zooms, I know it's my relationship I have with them that keeps them connected to my classroom and learning, even when the content is as difficult as "Wherefore art thou, Romeo?"

ZOOM! ZOOM!

HIGH SCHOOL MATH TEACHER, MR. HERMELING

The fourth quarter is flying by! With our educational classroom world getting flipped upside down, we have all had to adjust in order to keep students' learning going strong. The students are getting introduced to a new world of completing assignments on their own time and outside of the school building. They are learning to be independently responsible, preparing them for life after high school. The high school math classrooms of Mr. Kuehn and Mr. Hermeling have stayed very busy during the troubling times. Mr. Hermeling was fortunately prepared for this scenario, as he runs a flipped classroom model and has videos of all of his lessons online prepared for students. The students, in turn, are watching the videos of instruction and then completing the assignments in their own home. The students are doing a great job! The students in almost all math classes are completing their homework at a higher rate now than they were when they were attending school, in person. We teachers think it is because of a lack of distraction from friends around them! Students are learning that when given a task to complete, things work out much better for them when they get their work done immediately, rather than putting the work off until the last minute. One specific highlight in Mr. Hermeling's class is the performance of the students in Trigonometry, where 19 of the 20 students scored 90% or higher on their recent test. That accomplishment is an amazing testimonial to the students for their hard work and dedication to their academic performance.

A NOTE FROM THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

MR. ERIC DENNIS

Social distancing, pandemic, quarantine, all words I never would have expected to be dealing with as an educator. Because of this pandemic we have had to change the way we continue to provide education to our students. As I have watched the staff change the way they have instructed students I have thought about what, as educators, can we learn from remote learning? How can we teach the students in the classrooms and adapt how we are teaching remotely to better educate our students? This is a huge learning opportunity for the educators to really look at how we can adjust our instruction to make sure our students are prepared for the future. The education world will need to have discussions on how we can continue to adapt, change, and learn from this pandemic to make sure our students are prepared for the workforce. I cannot predict the future, but I am sure technology will continue to play a huge role in many businesses and more companies may have their employees work from home. Throughout the next few months I will be having conversations with the teachers about what they have learned and how we can adapt this new learning to make improvements to how we educate students. We have a great team of teachers at Conestoga Elementary. A team that is dedicated and wants all students to succeed. We know there will be gaps in student learning due to being at home for so long. There is a plan already in place to fill those gaps once we have the students back. I also know that we need to make some changes to how we educate our students to make sure they are prepared for future jobs. I hope everyone is doing well. We all miss our students and families.

ELEMENTARY TITLE TEACHER AND ELL UPDATE

TEACHER, MRS. KEENE

I cannot believe how fast this school year has gone. It has been a rewarding experience to see all of the intervention groups working on their phonics skills and reading fluency. I can honestly say that our Conestoga Elementary students are making great progress this year. As we are preparing to enter the 4th quarter of the school year, there have been many preparations for state testing and end-of-the-year benchmark testing. This process is amazing to watch as I am able to see the implementation of test taking strategies that are being taught to our students. Students and teachers, keep up the hard work! Throughout the month of February, I was able to help a student practice for the ELPA21 (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st century) test. This assessment has four components to it: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. The practice tests were available for the student and I to get familiarized with the computer and types of questions that would be asked on the ELPA21 assessment. Once the student felt comfortable with using the computer and practicing each area of assessment, we completed the ELPA21 summative assessment, in the beginning of March. The student felt very relieved to have this assessment completed; now we wait until the beginning of May to find out the results. Working with ELL students has been very rewarding the past two years. I have had the opportunity to help these students understand English better, to be able to watch their confidence flourish, and to even better my teaching craft and the ways that I can help them understand the content of their educational materials.

ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES CORNER:

ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL COACH: MRS. BERGMAYER

As you all know, the last months of this school year are not at all what we had planned. However, the teachers have been working hard at bringing "normalcy" to the students of Conestoga using innovative ideas and technology. I think it is safe to say even our youngest students are pretty close to being ZOOM experts. In my role, I have been working to support our teachers during this time! As you can imagine, teachers don't get a whole lot of time to themselves and now they are faced with not seeing students, families, or their co-workers! Teachers are social people- so we need to be aware of that! I have been using Flipgrid with staff to share resources, provide reminders, and even some inspirational stories. If teachers choose, they can reply to the Flipgrid or just an email! It's a great tool to use- I encourage you to check it out for your families! I would like to thank our Conestoga PTO for putting together a beautiful tribute to the staff at Conestoga- your support and encouragement keeps them going too!!!

JOURNALING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

ELEMENTARY COUNSELOR, MRS. LEFFLER

When you were younger, you may have kept an old-fashion diary, keeping it in that one secret spot in hopes that no one would ever find it. It was a safe calming way to record each days ups and downs and get your thoughts and feeling out of your head and down on paper. Nowadays, it is recognized as journaling, but the concept and its benefits do more for you than self-expression, it is good for your health. As Kasee Bailey, from Intermountain Healthcare, writes about 5 Powerful Health Benefits of Journaling. 1. Reduces Stress. An overabundance of stress can be damaging to your physical, mental, and emotional health. It's proven. Journaling is an incredible stress management tool, a good-for-you habit that lessens impact of physical stressors on your health. In fact, a study showed that expressive writing (like journaling) for only 15 to 20 minutes a day three to five times over the course of a four-month period was enough to lower blood pressure and improve liver functionality. 2. Improves Immune Function. Believe it or not, expressive writing can strengthen your immunity and decrease your risk of illness. Those who journal boast improved immune system functioning. 3. Keeps Memory Sharp. Journaling helps keep your brain in tip-top shape. Not only does it boost memory and comprehension, it also increases working memory capacity, which may reflect improved cognitive processing. 4. Boosts Mood. Want more sunshine in your life? Try journaling. A unique social and behavior outcome of journaling is this: it can improve your mood and give you a greater sense of overall emotional well-being and happiness. 5. Strengthens Emotional Functions. Related to mood is how journaling benefits overall emotional health: As journaling habits are developed, benefits become long-term, meaning that diarists become more in tune with their health by connecting with inner needs. Journaling evokes mindfulness and helps writers remain present while keeping perspective. It presents an opportunity for emotional catharsis and helps the brain regulate emotions. It provides a greater sense of confidence and self-identity. Journaling can help in the management of personal adversity and change, and emphasize important patterns and growth in life. What's more, journaling unlocks and engages right-brained creativity, which gives you access to your full brainpower. Truly, journaling fosters growth. Look forward to your journaling time. And know that you are doing something good for your mind and body.

SPRING EMBRYOLOGY AT-HOME

3RD GRADE TEACHERS: MRS. HONAKER, MRS. CLAUSEN, MRS. WILLIAMS

The students were looking forward to our embryology/life cycle study with chicks this year! With the closing of schools, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to do a virtual hatching! Our virtual journey began on April 6th with chicks hatching on April 27th and 28th. Each classroom teacher housed an incubator and a dozen eggs. The 3rd grade students were able to virtually engage in the embryonic development of chickens in a variety of ways! Throughout the 21 day process, students were able to learn and interact through live Zoom videos with the ESU 3 and receive daily development updates provided on our private Chick Facebook Page. Students explored the life cycle through provided literature, Nearpod activities and writing prompts. We are grateful that we were able to share this exciting experience and educational opportunity with our students from home!



NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

NURSE: MRS. MARTIN



In these times it is difficult to know what to do when your child is struggling with social isolation and all the challenges dealing with the temporary changes that have been brought on by COVID-19. As parents we want the best for our children but we are ourselves struggling with the reality that life has changed and it is frightening. What can we do when we feel so helpless ourselves? The bottom line is that we are not helpless and we can do some things to promote health and safety while keeping some sense of 'normal' in our world. I have included a link to some information about helping children cope with changes during this time. It is information from the National Association of School Psychologists in conjunction with the National Association of School Nurses. There is also information that includes a variety of community resources on the district website conestogacougars.org. Remember this is not our "new normal" as we have often heard. We will see a return to life as it was 'pre-Corona'. We have control; of our actions, how we respond to what we are hearing on tv, social media and from others, how we care for ourselves and our families, how we care for others outside the confines of our homes and how we process the overwhelming amounts of information (and misinformation) coming at us at all times. We have the power to choose how we handle all of this, how we follow the factual information and how we as a society respond to this pandemic. We can do this Conestoga family. We are truly #Conestogastrong.

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/03252020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout.pdf

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

FOOD SERVICE MANAGER, MRS. MEISINGER

Grab n Go meals served every Monday

11:00-12:30

for ALL Conestoga kids ages 1-18.

**Location for pick up is the northwest
Elementary parking lot**



ACTIVITIES AT CONESTOGA

MR. JASON AHRENS

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Most Valuable Player- Myah Cummings

Offensive Player of the Year-Myah Cummings

Defensive Player of the Year- Ellie Sachs

Most Improved Player- Ali Gansemer

Teammate of the Year- Ellie Sachs

Alexa Vogler "Toughest" Player of the Year- Mati Steckler

Junior Varsity Player of the Year-

Sophia Tegels

Myah Cummings- ECNC All-Conference Honorable Mention

LETTER WINNERS:

Elizabeth Sachs, 12

Myah Cummings, 11

Taylor McClatchey, 11

Olivia Priefert, 11

Lindee Watson, 10

Matilyn Steckler, 10

Danie Parriott, 10

Sophia Ackerman, 9

Haven Zimmerman, 9

Jameson Yost, 9

Alison Gansemer, 9

ACTIVITIES AT CONESTOGA.....CONTINUED

WRESTLING

Wrestler of the Year- Cameron Williams

Teammate of the Year- Owen Snipes

Newcomer of the Year- Ethan Williams

ECNC All-Conference: Ethan Williams, Braden Ruffner, Keaghon Chini, Cameron Williams

State Qualifiers: Braden Ruffner, Keaghon Chini, Cameron Williams, Jacob Dragon, Isaiah Parsons, Owen Snipes, Hunter Thonen

State Medalists: Cameron Williams 4th , Hunter Thonen 6th, Owen Snipes 6th.

LETTER WINNERS:

Jacob Dragon, 12	Braden Ruffner, 11
Dillon Leffler, 12	Trace Widler, 11
Isaiah Parsons, 12	Cameron Williams, 11
Justin Pick, 12	Keaghon Chini, 10
Owen Snipes, 12	Levi Lindsey, 9
Hunter Thonen, 12	Carter Plowman, 9
Dawson Hardesty, 11	Gage Totilas, 9
	Ethan Williams, 9



BOYS BASKETBALL

Offensive Player of the Year: Lane Fox

JV Offensive Player of the Year: Ty Fox

Defensive Player of the Year: Benjamin Welch

JV Defensive Player of the Year: Wesley Nickels

Most Improved Player: Jack Welch

JV Most Improved Player: Tobias Nolting

Teammates Of the Year: Kobe Gansemer and Johnny Welter

Lane Fox- ECNC First Team All-Conference,

Class C-1 Second Team All-State(Huskerland), Honorable Mention All-Area (OWH),

Honorable Mention All-State (OWH/LJS)

Benjamin Welch- ECNC Honorable Mention

All-Conference, Honorable Mention All-Area (OWH), Honorable Mention All-State (OWH/LJS)

Kobe Gansemer- Honorable Mention All-Area (OWH),

Honorable Mention All-State (OWH)

LETTER WINNERS:

Kobe Gansemer, 12	Benjamin Welch, 11
Lane Fox, 11	Bryson Berg, 10
Wesley Nickels, 11	Ty Fox, 10
Tobias Nolting, 11	Lucas Michel, 10
Koby Vogler, 11	Jack Welch, 9

ONE-ACT

Outstanding Actress: Kelsi Weilage

Outstanding Ensemble: Jasmine Rainey

Outstanding Stage Crew: Halley Shade

LETTER WINNERS:

Kelsi Weilage	Cassidy Hartig
Bella Hogue	Lily Drannen
Ellie Sachs	Jasmine Rainey
Jocelyn Deterding	Keely Gabehart
	Halley Shade

SPEECH

Rookie of the Year: Kelley Maier

Most Improved: Lindee Watson

Speaker of the Year: Lily Drannen

Degree of Distinction: Cassidy Hartig and Kelsi Weilage

LETTER WINNERS:

Cassidy Hartig	Lindee Watson
Kelsi Weilage	Jenna Erny
Jasmine Rainey	Kelley Maier
Lily Drannen	Jayden Speed

NSAA ACADEMIC ALL-STATE:

Wrestling:

Braden Ruffner, 11

Dawson Hardesty, 11

Girls Basketball:

Ellie Sachs, 12

Taylor McClatchey, 11

NSAA ACADEMIC ALL-STATE:

Speech:

Cassidy Hartig, 12

Kelsi Weilage, 12

Boys Basketball:

Lane Fox, 11

Benjamin Welch, 11

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